

**Land Stewardship Committee Meeting Minutes**  
**March 7, 2007, 4:00 P.M.**  
**Acton Town Hall**

Present: Bob Guba, Gigi Hopkins, Philip Keyes, Peggy Liversidge (minute-taker), Nan Towle Millett, Rich Rhode, Ann Shubert, Jim Snyder-Grant (chair), Tom Tidman

Meeting minutes: The February minutes were approved.

Spring lecture: There was a brief discussion of who would put up flyers and where for the March 21 talk (by David Stewart-Smith about early New England stone structures; 7:00 at the library). Philip will also try to get announcements placed in the Beacon and the Acton Weekly.

Heath Hen winter trail extension: Bob reported that he and Dave cleared a short trail extension from the island where the winter trail had ended to the ACT's Whitcomb land. This also traverses an area that is wet except when it is frozen.

Nashoba Brook Council meeting: Jim reported that he and Laurie had attended a meeting of people from various towns that Nashoba Brook flows through, but it was mainly devoted to reports rather than trying to set out an agenda for things that could be accomplished.

Gate padlocks: Bob stated that Natural Resources employees had put padlocks on the gates at the Town Forest (2) and at Camp Acton.

Camp Acton picnic tables: Bob said that he had spoken to Tom about a possible change to the Camp Acton regulations (whether to require that if picnic tables are moved, they be returned to their original placement), but they decided not to do this. Bob suggested instead that the tables be stenciled with the campsite number so that if one is moved, it will be clear where it belongs.

Brush pile burning: Bob reported that a Town crew has burned all the brush piles at Grassy and Nagog Hill, but the Jenks piles are being left for wildlife use.

Dog policy update: Tom reported that a committee of residents concerned about dog policy (including Arboretum and Recreation Dept. representatives) has met several times and has submitted draft recommendations to the Town Manager. The group looked at policies from around the country and heard a range of opinions from town residents. Besides trying to find a middle ground about where leashing will be required and where dogs won't be allowed at all (e.g., playgrounds, maybe the Arboretum and NARA), Tom said that the idea of creating a dog park at Great Hill, on the small, isolated soccer field to the left of the firehouse parking lot, is being considered.

Acton cleanup day: This will be on Saturday, May 5, and Laurie is again taking charge of organizing it.

Rock bench: Nan showed a picture of the flat rock slab that a Town crew has moved from the Town Forest quarry area to the stone chamber site for use as a bench. It still needs to be moved a bit to situate it properly, but it is essentially in place.

Bobwhite (quail) release idea: Gigi would like to have us try to establish one or two covies of bobwhites (approximately 10 or 12 per covey) in some of our meadow areas. She thinks Jenks and Stoneymeade might provide sufficient space and good habitat, though she wants to learn more about their food sources. Generally we are a bit north of their northernmost limit, but with many southerly species moving further north, they could survive here. One problem, however, is that because they are ground-nesters, they are quite vulnerable to predators (including dogs). She would like to get the Conservation Commission's permission to proceed, and adult birds would then need to be purchased from private businesses that hatch birds (the state no longer has hatcheries, but Mass. Fish and Wildlife has lists of people who could supply the birds); they cost several dollars each. Tom said that we might be able to use funds that are available from a parcel settlement on Pope Rd. Someone else said that the ConsCom was meeting this evening (3/7), and Gigi said she could attend.

Firewood for Scout jamboree: Following up on a Scout request about firewood, Tom said that he has asked the Town crew chief to handle it.

Vernal pools: Gigi said she would like to do more work on vernal pools this season, but she needs a new tape recorder and tapes. A vote was taken and she was authorized to spend up to \$40 for one that she has decided would be suitable for her purpose. She has some Morrison Farm data almost ready that she wants to submit.

Remaining money in 2007 budget: Tom said that we have \$511 left in this year's budget. Projects that will be requiring money are the Grassy Pond boardwalk and some portable boardwalk sections that Bob suggests be built for use on the muddy section of the Nagog Hill access trail from the parking lot to the field behind Hybrid Farm. He would like to make them only 30" wide and with less sturdy boards in the hope that this would discourage horse riders from attempting to cross them.

Apple tree pruning at Jenks: Bob said that, at his request, a town employee with apple pruning experience has pruned the three small apple trees planted several years ago at Jenks.

Possible new steward for Jenks: Gigi asked if we might want a new steward for Jenks, and if so, she suggested Allison Gallagher. Gigi thinks Allison would be interested and is willing to talk with her and invite her to a meeting.

Website photo gallery: Jim and Gigi plan to start looking through pictures that could be the beginning of a website photo gallery, and Jim will be looking at the software possibilities. He hopes to set it up so that it can just be transferred onto the website.

Next meeting: The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 4, at 4:00 PM.